

**Text: 1 John 1**

Section 1

*1What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life--2and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us--3what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. 4These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete. (1 John 1:1-4)*

This letter begins very much like John's Gospel, asserting that Jesus Christ is indeed the pre-existent God.

**1In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2He was in the beginning with God. 3All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. 4In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. 5The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. (John 1:1-5)**

Later in John Chapter 1 John the Baptist confirmed Jesus' pre-existence by saying "**He existed before me.**" Now, if you are familiar with the Gospel accounts you know that, in terms of physical age, John the Baptist was a few months older than Jesus Christ. Clearly this John was also aware of Jesus' Deity, and therefore His pre-existence.

**29The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! 30" This is He on behalf of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'** (John 1:29-30)

Even the Book of Genesis confirms the plurality of Persons in the single Godhead by recording God as saying of Himself "**Let Us.**" This is confirmed in John 1 when it says "**All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.**"

**26Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (Genesis 1:26-27)**

Jesus later plainly identified Himself as God by ascribing to Himself the name of God by which God revealed Himself to Moses.

**14God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" (Exodus 3:14)**

**58Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." (John 8:58)**

Beyond affirming His deity, these first verses of 1 John 1 proclaim Jesus' physical nature. A heresy already common at the time of this letter stated that Jesus was not a truly physical, human Being, but rather just a Spirit that appeared to be physical. John puts that assertion to rest, as did the other Gospel writers.

**36While they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be to you." 37But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit. 38And He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39" See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." 40And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. 41While they still could not believe it because of their joy and amazement, He said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" 42They gave Him a piece of a broiled fish; 43and He took it and ate it before them. (Luke 24:36-43)**

Later in this letter, John goes further and states that belief "**that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh**" is necessary for one to be a Christian.

**1Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; 3and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world. (1 John 4:1-3)**

The Gospel—indeed, the entire Word of God—is grounded in historical events. This is very important. Many of the world's religions are built upon myths, or tales that are not taken to be historically true, but rather intended to simply illustrate some moral precept. Attempts to view the Bible in this way do a disservice to God's Word, and to the One that gave it to us. As a history book, the Bible stands up to any work of comparable antiquity when viewed objectively. Peter, John, and the other apostles proclaimed the Truth of the Gospel based not upon vague stories or moralistic precepts, but upon events that actually happened. Therefore Peter said, "**We are witnesses....**"

**34**Opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, **35**but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him. **36**"The word which He sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all)--**37**you yourselves know the thing which took place throughout all Judea, starting from Galilee, after the baptism which John proclaimed. **38**"You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. **39**"We are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem They also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross. **40**"God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He become visible, **41**not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, that is, to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. **42**"And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead. **43**"Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins." (Acts 10:34-43)

John is writing so that his "**joy may be complete,**" and enjoy fellowship with the Father, with Christ, and with believers. Why does He gain joy from doing this? Because Jesus commanded that His followers proclaim the Gospel of salvation through His Name to all people. We are confirmed in the Faith and enjoy fellowship with Him only when we are obedient to His commands.

**8**but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

**21**"He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him." (John 14:21)

## Section 2

*5*This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. (1 John 1:5)

God is perfect, sinless, holy.

**48**"Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matthew 5:48)

This makes the sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf all the more astounding, in that the pre-existent, sinless God was willing to take our sin upon Himself—to, for a time, "**be sin,**" so that we might through faith have His righteousness imputed to us.

**21**He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

Again, let me reference the vision recorded in Isaiah 6 to demonstrate God's holiness. Having truly encountered God in all His holiness, Isaiah could only worship and confess his sinfulness. This is the only possible reaction when we finally see just how holy and perfect God is, and how sinful and dirty we are.

**1**In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. **2**Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.

**3**And one called out to another and said,  
"Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts,  
The whole earth is full of His glory."

**4**And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke.

**5**Then I said,

"Woe is me, for I am ruined!  
Because I am a man of unclean lips,  
And I live among a people of unclean lips;  
For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."

**6**Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with tongs. **7**He

**touched my mouth with it and said, "Behold, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away and your sin is forgiven." (Isaiah 6:1-7)**

### Section 3

*6If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; 7but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. (1 John 1:6-7)*

Remember, we are saved when we confess Christ as Lord, as Sovereign, as Master.

**9that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; 10for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. (Romans 10:9-10)**

When we “walk in darkness” we enslave ourselves not to Christ, but to sin.

**34Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. (John 8:34)**

In a very real sense, for a professing Christian to commit sin is to commit treason against the One he calls Lord and King. If he is unrepentant then he is most likely not a true believer, and ultimately will receive the due penalty for treason.

**23For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)**

Again, those that sin habitually, without remorse or repentance, are not Christians. I'm not making that judgment—God does, throughout His Word. Therefore, in the following verses He names those that “**will not inherit the kingdom of God.**” While these behaviors describe practically all of us prior to salvation, the operative word in this passage for believers is “**were.**” If “**are**” is more applicable to you with regard to these behaviors, you have reason to doubt your salvation.

**9Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. 11Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)**

Again referencing John 14:

**21"He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him." (John 14:21)**

### Section 4

*8If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. (1 John 1:8)*

First of all, everyone (except Christ) is a sinner.

**23for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (Romans 3:23)**

Even the best of Christians unfortunately falls into sin from time to time. Paul talked about this at length in Romans 7—if the human author of half of the New Testament lamented his inability to avoid sin, what does that say about the rest of us?

**14For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. 15For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate. 16But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good. 17So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. 18For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. 19For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. 20But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. 21I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. 22For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, 23but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. 24Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? 25Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin. (Romans 7:14-25)**

Those that say they have no sin are liars (and therefore unrepentant sinners). They may be hearers of the Word, but they are not doers. As James says, such people are deluding themselves with regard to salvation.

**21Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. 22But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. 23For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; 24for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. 25But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does. 26If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless. 27Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world. (James 1:21-27)**

### Section 5

*9If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)*

When we do sin, and when we confess that sin, our Great High Priest, Jesus Christ, intercedes on our behalf before the Father. What a great blessing!

**1My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; (1 John 2:1)**

However, we are not to give ourselves over to sin simply because we have the promise of forgiveness when we confess. Such an attitude represents abandoning Christ's Lordship and enslaving ourselves to sin. Such behavior is, again, treasonous.

**1What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? 2May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? 3Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? 4Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. 5For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; 7for he who has died is freed from sin. 8Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, 9knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. 10For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. 11Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. 12Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, 13and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. 14For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace. 15What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be! 16Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? 17But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, 18and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. (Romans 6:1-18)**

Check your fruits! If the first list in the following verses describes your life better than the second, you need to confess your sin—and quite possibly repent and believe!

**19Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, 21envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (Galatians 5:19-24)**

### Section 6

*10If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us. (1 John 1:10)*

This verse is similar to verse 8, so I will use the opportunity to take a slightly different angle. Those that say they do not sin are, again, deliberately lying or shamefully deluded. When we encounter sin in the Church, Jesus Himself commanded that we confront the sinner and, if he is ultimately unrepentant, put him out of the Church. Paul said something similar. In other words, those that fall into habitual and grievous sins are to be called to repentance. If they refuse, in effect saying that they have not sinned, they are to be removed from the fellowship of God's Church. Church membership is not a right; it is a privilege, and one that is to be contingent

upon one's obedience to God's commands. The failure of the modern American Church to exercise discipline as prescribed in God's Word defies God, and makes us appear as lukewarm hypocrites in the eyes of the world. This must be corrected.

**15**"If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.**16**"But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that **BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED.****17**"If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. (Matthew 18:15-17)

**9**I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; **10**I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world. **11**But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler--not even to eat with such a one.**12**For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church? **13**But those who are outside, God judges. **REMOVE THE WICKED MAN FROM AMONG YOURSELVES.** (1 Corinthians 5:9-13)

Please don't take me as saying that a true Christian can lose his salvation. This is not the case. Those that are put out of the Church, or simply leave, preferring sin and rebellion to obedience, were never believers at all.

**18**Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour.**19**They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us. (1 John 2:18-19)